

What are the best types of exercise? While there are endless forms of exercise, experts categorize physical activity into four broad types based on what each calls upon your body to do and how the movement benefits you.

Aerobic exercise is marked by an increased heart rate. Although most aerobic exercises require you to move your whole body, the main focus is on your heart and lungs (Aerobic exercise is often called “cardio” because it challenges and benefits your cardiovascular system). Activities like walking, swimming, dancing and cycling, if done at sufficient intensity, get you breathing faster and your heart working harder. Aerobic exercises burn fat, improve your mood, reduce inflammation and lower blood sugar. Strength training, sometimes called resistance training, should be performed two to three times a week. Squats, lunges, push-ups and the exercises performed on resistance machines or using weights or bands help maintain and even build muscle mass and strength. Strength training also helps prevent falls, keep bones strong, lower blood sugar levels, and improve balance. Do a combination of both isometric and isotonic exercises. Isometric exercises, such as doing planks and holding leg lifts, are done without movement. They are great for maintaining strength and improving stability. Isotonic exercises require you to bear weight throughout a range of motion. Bicep curls, bench presses and sit-ups are all forms of isotonic exercise. **Stretching exercises** keep your muscles and tendons flexible, preserve your posture, and improve mobility, especially as you age. Stretching can be done every day. Balance exercises call on the various systems that help you stay upright and oriented, such as those of the inner ear, vision and muscles and joints. Tai chi and yoga are great forms of balance exercises that can help you avoid falls and stay independent well into your senior years. **How much exercise do I need?** How much exercise you should be getting depends on several factors, including your current level of fitness, your fitness goals, the types of exercise you’re planning to do, and whether you have deficits in such areas as strength, flexibility or balance. As a general rule, 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise) is recommended as a weekly minimum. As you become more fit, you’ll want to exceed that in order to reap maximum benefit. A natural way of splitting up the 150 minutes might be to do a 30-minute session five times per week, or you can break it up and do two 15-minute sessions during a single day. Adopt whatever schedule fits your lifestyle. For strength exercises, aim to work all your major muscle groups twice to three times each week, leaving 48 hours between each workout for recovery. If you do “total-body” workouts, that’s two sessions per week. If you choose to split your workouts to target a specific muscle group (e.g., “leg day”), that will require more frequent workouts. Just make sure you’re leaving 48 hours of rest before you re-work a major muscle. If you have noticed problems with your balance, such as unsteadiness, dizziness, or vertigo, talk to a healthcare provider for recommendations about balance-specific exercises. Get in three half-hour workouts each week in addition to a 30-minute walk at least twice weekly. It’s best to stretch after you have warmed up for a few minutes, or perform stretching exercises after you completed your workout. When stretching each muscle group, take it slow and steady, release, repeat again. But how much exercise is too much? You should expect a little muscle soreness after workouts, especially in the beginning. But if you find that your body is simply not recovering between workouts, you may be overtraining. Remember that seniors need more recovery time than younger people. With the exception of “welcome” muscle soreness, an exercise program should make you feel good. If it doesn’t, you’re probably overdoing it. That doesn’t mean you should quit, only that you should dial back the intensity or frequency of your workouts until you hit the “sweet spot” in which you’ve “tired out” your body but then recovered enough to tackle your next session with enthusiasm. **What are the benefits of exercise?** A smartly designed exercise program will benefit your body and mind in innumerable ways. The benefits of exercise on mental health are well documented. For example, one major study found that sedentary people are 44% more likely to be depressed. Another found that those with mild to moderate depression could get similar results to those obtained through antidepressants just by exercising for 90 minutes each week. The key appears to be the release of brain chemicals such as serotonin and dopamine, which help lift mood and combat stress. We’re all familiar with exercise’s ability to improve cardiovascular health. But how does exercise lower blood pressure? Interestingly, when you stimulate your circulatory system through aerobic exercise, you’re temporarily increasing your blood pressure by forcing the system to work harder—but when you’ve finished exercising, your blood pressure drops to a lower level than it was before you began. Many people think of exercise as an integral part of weight loss—and, although diet is also extremely important, they’re not wrong. But what exercise burns the most calories? Generally, aerobic exercises (cardio) are great for expending calories and reducing fat. But don’t overlook the effectiveness of strength training, which optimizes your body’s ratio of lean muscle to fat (It’s also the best exercise for bone strength). There’s no Holy Grail when it comes to a single best weight-loss exercise. The best exercise to lose weight is the one you’ll do consistently. Whatever gets your heart rate up and gets your body moving—while having fun and staying motivated—is the exercise that will help you shed pounds. **What if my exercise ability is limited?** Everyone can and should do some form of exercise, even if they face severe limitations. Experts have designed specific exercises for seniors that are low-impact, safe and able to be done even from a sitting position if necessary. If you’re concerned about fall risk, balance exercises for seniors can be done holding onto a chair or doorframe. For example, standing behind a chair, you can hold its back and lift one leg to about the height of the middle of the calf of the other leg while tightening your abdominal muscles. As you progress, you might try holding the chair with just one hand and eventually letting go of the chair. Even **core-strengthening exercises** for seniors can be adapted to those with limited abilities. For example, a standard plank is done by holding yourself parallel to the floor with only your forearms and toes touching the mat. An easier version allows you to also place your knees on the mat. But a still easier method is to do the plank while standing and leaning forward. You put your elbows and forearms on a desk, table or wall while resting on the balls of your feet and keeping your back straight. There are a variety of stretching exercises for seniors to suit people of different abilities. If **holding poses on your hands** and knees is out of the question, you could try a full-body stretch in which you tie on your back, straighten your legs and extend your hands along the floor past your head. Some stretches can be done while seated, such as overhead stretches and neck rotations. In fact, other types of exercise also can be done from a seated position. Other chair exercises for seniors include bicep curls (with dumbbells or elastic bands), overhead dumbbell presses, shoulder blade squeezes, calf raises, sit-to-stands (chair squats) and knee extensions. **What exercises are best for heart health?** The best exercise program will incorporate both aerobic and strength training, since that’s the best way to strengthen your entire body, improve your endurance and ensure your long-term health. But if your main concern is how to improve **cardiovascular health**, then you should put a premium on cardiovascular exercises that force your heart and lungs to work harder, sending oxygen to your cells. While strength training certainly does have cardiovascular benefits, cardio workouts excel when it comes to reducing blood pressure, maintaining the health of the inner walls of your arteries, releasing enzymes that break down blood clots, and even promoting the growth of new arteries feeding the heart. Regular aerobic exercise also significantly lowers the risk of type 2 diabetes. Although diabetes usually isn’t thought of as a heart problem, a lower risk of diabetes also lowers the risk of heart disease, since high blood sugar takes a toll on blood vessels and the nerves that control the heart. When you exercise, you call on your body’s cells to take glucose (sugar) out of the blood, which they do by becoming more sensitive to insulin, the hormone crucial to glucose metabolism. That means your cells remain insulin-sensitive long after you’re finished exercising. And since obesity is a significant risk for diabetes, exercises that help you shed fat—especially around your middle—will help you keep diabetes at bay. What to know about exercise and how to start Exercise involves engaging in physical activity and increasing the heart rate beyond resting levels. It is an important part of preserving physical and mental health. Whether people engage in light exercise, such as going for a walk, or high intensity activities, for example, uphill cycling or weight training, regular exercise provides a huge range of benefits for the body and mind. Taking part in exercise of any intensity every day is essential for preventing a range of diseases and other health issues. In this article, we explain the different types of exercise and their benefits, as well as the considerations for designing a fitness regime. Types and benefits People divide exercise into three broad categories: aerobic anaerobic agility training We describe each of these categories below. Aerobic exercise aims to improve how the body uses oxygen. Most aerobic exercise takes place at average levels of intensity over longer periods. An aerobic exercise session involves warming up, exercising for at least 20 minutes, and then cooling down. Aerobic exercise mostly uses large muscle groups. Aerobic exercise provides the following benefits: improves muscle strength in the lungs, heart, and whole body lowers blood pressure improves circulation and blood flow in the muscles increases the red blood cell count to enhance oxygen transportation reduces the risk Trusted Source of diabetes, stroke, and cardiovascular disease (CVD) improves life expectancy Trusted Source and symptoms for people with coronary artery diseases stimulates bone growth and reduces the risk of osteoporosis when at high intensity improves sleep hygiene enhances stamina by increasing the body’s ability to store energy molecules, such as fats and carbohydrates, within muscle Anaerobic exercise Anaerobic exercise does not use oxygen for energy. People use this type of exercise to build power, strength, and muscle mass. These exercises are high-intensity activities that should last no longer than around 2 minutes. Anaerobic exercises include: weightlifting sprinting intensive and fast skipping with a rope interval training isometrics any rapid burst of intense activity While all exercise benefits the heart and lungs, anaerobic exercise provides fewer benefits for cardiovascular health than aerobic exercise and uses fewer calories. However, it is more effective than aerobic exercise for building muscle and improving strength. Increasing muscle mass causes the body to burn more fat, even when resting. Muscle is the most efficient tissue for burning fat in the body. Agility training Agility training aims to improve a person’s ability to maintain control while speeding up, slowing down, and changing direction. In tennis, for example, agility training helps a player maintain control over their court positioning through good recovery after each shot. People who take part in sports that heavily rely on positioning, coordination, speed, and balance need to engage in agility training regularly. The following sports are examples of ones that require agility tennis American football hockey badminton volleyball basketball soccer martial arts boxing wrestling Stretching and flexibility Yoga can help improve a person’s flexibility and relieve stress. Some exercises combine stretching, muscle conditioning, and balance training. A popular and effective example is yoga. Yoga movements improve balance, flexibility, posture, and circulation. The practice originated in India thousands of years ago and aims to unify the mind, body, and spirit. Modern yoga uses a combination of meditation, posture, and breathing exercises to achieve the same goals. A yoga practitioner can tailor a course for individual needs. A person looking to manage arthritis might need gentle stretches to improve mobility and function. Someone with depression, on the other hand, may need more emphasis on the relaxation and deep breathing elements of yoga. Pilates is another stretching option that promotes flexibility and core strength. Tai chi is also an effective option for exercise that promotes calm stretching rather than intensity. Here, learn more about yoga. Risks of not exercising A sedentary lifestyle can increase the risk Trusted Source of the following health problems: cardiovascular disease type 2 diabetes cancer osteoporosis It can also contribute to an increased risk of premature death from all causes, including the complications of being overweight and obesity. In many parts of the world, including the United States, the number of overweight and obese people continues to increase rapidly. According to the most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Trusted Source, that researchers did in 2013–2014 across the U.S., more than 2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese. The same survey found that around 1 in 13 adults have extreme obesity and face an increased risk of severe health complications. Discover how to prevent cardiovascular disease. Finding time to exercise Taking the stairs instead of an elevator can be a great way for busy people to meet exercise guidelines. Fitting exercise into a busy schedule can be a roadblock to a successful regime. However, people do not need to dedicate large amounts of extra time to exercise to see the benefits. Here are some tips for fitting physical activity in a busy schedule: See which car journeys you can replace with walking or cycling. Is driving to work necessary? If so, try parking half a mile away from the office and walking the final bit. People who commute to work by public transport could try getting off their bus or train a few stops early and walking the rest of the way. Consider walking up and down the stairs at your office instead of taking elevators or escalators. Try to think about the amount of time spent watching television and avoid binge-watching TV shows. While watching television for extended periods, light exercises, such as stomach crunches or jumping jacks, can help a person include more physical activity in their day. If a person enjoys video games, they could consider playing games that encourage physical activity, such as exercise routines on a Nintendo Wii. Vigorous housework, gardening, and going up and down the stairs while doing chores also qualify as physical activity and can help people meet the guidelines productively. People will likely gain the most benefit from exercises they enjoy that fit their lifestyle. Some of the examples below are the easiest to fit into a daily routine: Go for a brisk 30-minute walk five times every week. Walk your dog more often or go for walks and jogs with friends. Try to add swimming to your weekly routine, even if it is not every day. Join some exercise classes that are fun, collaborative, and educational. Become a member of a martial arts club. Beginner’s sessions can be gentle and fun. Exercise is sometimes a gradual learning curve. A person should spread sessions across the week and scale up the intensity slowly. It is important for people to ensure they drink plenty of water during and after exercise. Checking with a doctor is a good precaution to take if someone has a health condition or injury that could impact exercise levels, or that exercise could make worse. While a combination of aerobic and anaerobic exercise provides the most benefit, any exercise is better than none for people who currently have an inactive lifestyle. Guidelines Current U.S. guidelines Trusted Source recommend that people do one of the following: at least 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise a week a minimum of 75–150 minutes of vigorous-intensity, aerobic physical activity a combination of the two types of exercise Toward these goals, it is worth remembering that even 10-minute bursts of physical activity during the day provide health benefits. Please note: Medical News Today does not imply a warranty of fitness for a particular purpose or endorse any of these applications. Nobody at MNT has evaluated them for medical accuracy. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved them unless otherwise indicated. Tips for starting Exercise may be difficult to maintain for some people. Consider the following tips to achieve long-term success: Have a clear goal: Whether for health reasons or otherwise, try to always keep in mind the reason you started increasing your exercise levels. Work at your own pace: Doing too much too quickly can increase the risk of injury and the chance to develop a stable routine. Set targets based on the goals you established at the start of the regimen and celebrate small wins to boost confidence. Enjoy yourself: A regimen is more sustainable if a person enjoys the physical activities that it involves. Join a club with a friend: If you join a fitness club with a friend, or exercise with a friend, you may enjoy the sessions more. Some people prefer not to have the stress of someone else around. This depends on you. Trainers and teachers can be helpful: People just starting a regimen or looking to step up their routine may benefit from a personal trainer or teacher. They can provide motivation and guidance, helping people track their goals and stay dedicated. Vary your exercises: Change your exercise program every few weeks. Mixing it up can help a person work on different muscle groups and increase the range of benefits. If you enjoy one particular exercise, such as running, try changing the speed and distance of a run, or follow a different route with more hills. Make it a habit: After a few weeks of regularity, an exercise routine starts to become a habit, even if you find it difficult or boring at first. The benefits of regular physical activity are wide-reaching and should form a part of every person’s day to help them remain healthy. Q: I have a prohibitive physical impediment that prevents me from exercising in the standard way. What is the best course of action for getting started? A: It depends on what type of impediment it is. I would encourage you to obtain medical clearance first from your primary healthcare provider, and then seek the services of a Certified Personal Trainer, especially if you have never exercised before. Without knowledge of how to properly execute various exercises, a

person can cause further injury to themselves. Also, proper use of exercise, depending on the type of physical impediment, can possibly help improve this situation. Are there benefits for choosing an elliptical over a treadmill if you're getting your cardio at the gym? When you're working toward getting in the 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, you might make a beeline for the cardio equipment at the gym. And you might also be wondering, with all the options — treadmill, exercise bike, elliptical, stair climber, rower, and sometimes more — if you're choosing the right one. "Each piece of cardio equipment has its pros and cons," says Greg Summerville, MD, a sports medicine physician at the UNC School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. These pros and cons are, however, different for everyone. Dr. Summerville works with patients to create exercise prescriptions for his patients, and takes a range of factors into account, such as age, function, and mobility, as well as existing health conditions or injuries. Those things all make a difference when it comes to which machine is best for you — as do your specific fitness goals. All of these aforementioned cardio machines are designed to improve cardiovascular health, meaning it increases your heart and respiratory rate to strengthen your heart muscle and build endurance. But some also build strength, Summerville says. So, think about what you want out of your workout. Are you there for a strict cardio workout or one that combines cardio and strength, for instance? Answering questions like that will help you pick the appropriate machine for you. Also, if you have any disability, injuries, or other health issues that could interfere with your ability to safely exercise — or use one of these machines — talk to your doctor or healthcare provider before starting a new exercise routine. And finally, if you're going to get your cardio in at the gym using one of these machines, pick one that you like using (so long as you can safely do so). Finding a workout you enjoy doing makes it that much easier to come back to and stick with. After all, the movement you do (whatever that looks like) is better than some "perfect" workout you don't do. Here's a rundown of some common cardio machines and their specific pros and cons: Treadmill What It Is A machine with an endless moving belt for walking or running. "I'd call this the bread-and-butter of cardio machines," says Araceli De Leon, an ACE-certified personal trainer and health coach. Muscles Targeted The treadmill primarily helps build your cardiovascular endurance, says De Leon, but walking or running will also work the lower body muscles, including the quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, and calves, according to ACSM. It's not the most effective way to build these muscles, but using the treadmill will help to maintain them, Summerville adds. Perks You can adjust the speed and incline to increase intensity or perform an interval or HIIT workout, says De Leon. Compared with the elliptical and rower, a treadmill has been found to burn more fat, according to a study published in 2021 in the Journal of Sports Science & Medicine. (It's worth noting that that study only included nine men and no women.) Considerations Being on your phone and looking down or looking up at a TV in the gym can strain your neck, says De Leon. Also, walking too close to the console or holding onto the rails can affect your body's walking cycle. Try to stay in the middle of the belt and avoid holding on, she says. (If you can't safely use a treadmill without holding on, then another machine may be a better option. See below.) The treadmill can also be a higher impact activity. Though running or walking on a treadmill is not as hard on the joints as running on concrete, says Summerville, exercising on a track or turf outside will be a more joint-friendly form of exercise. Exercise Bike What It Is Indoor or stationary exercise bikes come in a variety of styles, such as an air bike (where pedaling pushes air through the wheel, providing resistance), a spin or indoor bike (where you can manually adjust resistance), and a recumbent bike (where you sit in an reclined position), among others. Muscles Targeted Your quads and hamstrings are the workhorses while cycling. Using a stationary bike can also build lower-body muscle. "By increasing the resistance, you can also get a significant strength-building workout with your cardio," says Summerville. Perks On certain styles of bike, you can increase the resistance and stand up to pedal, which simulates climbing a hill, Summerville says. He also recommends indoor bicycling to those who are recovering from lower-extremity injuries. If you have balance problems, a stationary bike is a good option for you, since your feet are in one fixed position (as opposed to a treadmill or stair machine). Considerations While it's low-impact and easy on the joints, if you have anterior knee pain (pain in the front of the knee), Summerville recommends moving to the elliptical, as the pedaling motion on the bike may put too much force on the knee. Elliptical Machine What It Is An elliptical is a stationary machine with two large pedals that move in a circular motion through space, as well as handlebars that move back and forth. You use the elliptical standing up. Muscles Targeted Quads, hamstrings, and calves are all worked during this type of exercise, particularly if the resistance is increased. Without using a challenging resistance, this is mostly a cardio workout, says Summerville. Perks As a low-impact workout, the elliptical is ideal for beginners, as well as people recovering from injury or in physical therapy, says De Carlo. "There is no pounding; your feet never leave the pedals that they're on," she says. An elliptical (as well as rower, below) can also be an option for those with physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis, the Journal of Sports Science & Medicine study notes. Considerations Avoid hunching, lifting your heels, or leaning too far back, all common mistakes De Leon sees on the elliptical. "Maintain the proper center of gravity on the machine," she says. Stair Climber What It Is A stair climber, much like the name implies, is a machine that simulates walking up steps. There are many types of stair climbers, such as a step mill (revolving, escalator-like stairs), stair stepper (which has one pedal for each foot that you step on), or vertical climbers (ladder-like steppers). Muscles Targeted "The stair stepper really activates the glutes, quads, and calves," says Summerville. A step mill-style climber will be more of a cardio-based workout (you adjust the speed), while a stair stepper allows you to adjust the resistance, which will be more muscle strengthening, he says. Perks Stair climbing is usually a high-intensity workout. As such, the stair stepper offers one of the highest calorie-burning cardio machines, Summerville notes. Considerations Because it's a higher-intensity exercise, you may not be able to do this type of workout for as long a duration as a less intense workout. If you have knee or hip problems, a stair machine may aggravate that pain, and Summerville recommends using an elliptical instead. On a step mill, it can be common to use the handrails to support your weight and take some work off your legs, but this can put too much pressure on shoulders and wrists, De Leon points out. If you're struggling to keep up with the machine, decrease the speed. Rower Machine What It Is A rowing machine is one where you sit on a sliding seat and use both hands to pull a handle to move you back and forth, mimicking a rowing motion. Muscles Targeted Muscles of the upper back and shoulders, quads, calves, and glutes get worked during the pushback and pull phase. Perks The rower can be a one-stop shop. "It's a total-body conditioning machine. You get cardio, as well as upper and lower body strengthening," says Summerville. You can also adjust it to get the workout you're looking for. For instance, by turning down the resistance, the workout becomes mostly cardio; increasing the resistance will provide more muscle activation, he says. Rowing is also a low-impact activity, meaning it's easy on joints. Considerations It may seem intimidating if you've never used one, but once you get the hang of the push-pull rowing motion, you'll feel more confident. Start at the lowest resistance first and increase it as you become more comfortable on the machine (and as your stamina improves). The Takeaway Part of choosing the right cardio machine at the gym is aligning it with your fitness goals, health conditions, and preferred types of exercise. There are many options to choose from, including treadmills, stationary bikes, ellipticals, and rowing machines. Each offers different benefits, from building lower body strength to providing low-impact cardio. Pick the machine you enjoy using the most to help you stay motivated. Prevention Lead Gosia Bowling and Head of Emotional Wellbeing Brendan Street discuss how we can get fitter and healthier, from exercising more to having a better sleep routine. A survey during the COVID-19 pandemic by Public Health England revealed that the consecutive lockdowns had taken their toll on our physical health, with households across the country reverting to unhealthy eating habits and reducing the amount of exercise undertaken. One-third of people reported snacking on unhealthy food and drinks at least once a day (35%) with data showing an increase of around 15% in sales of take home snack foods, including confectionery and biscuits One-third said they were exercising less (30%) in the latter half of the year 29% of smokers agreed they smoked more since the second national lockdown, attributing the change to being worried about their physical and mental health (42%) and having money worries (41%) 23% of drinkers (at least 1 unit a week) claimed that their alcohol intake has increased since the COVID pandemic – this is reflected in a 28% increase in take home alcohol sales compared to the previous year. Here are 5 ways you can regain control of your health and fitness. 1. Get moving Being active can improve your physical wellbeing, and can also help you maintain a healthy immune system and a healthy mind. For healthy adults, the recommendation is to complete a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise across the course of the week. Short duration, very vigorous exercise (around 75 minutes) can also bring equivalent health benefits, so you can choose the types of activities that best suit you and your lifestyle. Remember: the greatest gains are seen in those who go from doing nothing to doing something. You don't have to be an athlete; everything you do counts. 2. Build your strength At least twice a week, all adults should also undertake activities which increase or maintain muscle strength (resistance training). The activities chosen should use the major muscle groups in the upper and lower body. Daily activities that build strength can include stair climbing, carrying shopping bags, lifting and carrying children, and gardening. In a gym environment this can include activities such as using bodyweight, free weights, resistance machines or resistance bands. Joining a gym can also provide you with plenty of options for strengthening specific muscles. Our gyms are fully equipped with resistance machines and free weights. We also offer a range of group classes where you use your bodyweight and weights to strengthen your body, such as HIIT and BODYPUMP™. 3. Drink more water Now is a great time to try out new habits such as drinking more water. It's recommended we drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid each day. Avoid options with added sugar or sweeteners, or caffeinated drinks. Caffeine is a diuretic and causes you to lose water. Dehydration can reduce your concentration and thirst can be mistaken for hunger, leading to snacking. Why not start the day with a glass of water and a squeeze of lemon? Sparkling water with fruit or herbal teas are also a great way to keep your beverages interesting without going too sweet. You may want to track your intake and use your urine colour as a trusty hydration indicator. Is your urine clear and pale? If not, you aren't drinking enough water. The NHS urine chart can help you to work out if you are drinking enough or if you need to increase your fluid intake. 4. Improve your diet Refined, processed and sugary snacks can compromise immune function, so simple swaps to fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds are a great way to also get more antioxidants in your diet, which also reduces inflammation in the body. Certain healthy eating changes can boost your feelings of energy and vigour, if you are feeling sluggish due to a sedentary lifestyle or unhealthy eating. Have a look at our article on nutrition tips for boosting energy for more tips to increase your energy levels. You could also check out our simple store cupboard recipes, which can provide inspiration to kickstart your healthy eating. 5. Get more sleep Being confined to home with disrupted routines and using artificial light and screens for work, communication and entertainment has played havoc with our body clocks and the country is now having trouble sleeping. A staggering 50% of the UK population report that their sleep has been disturbed due to COVID-19 and the number of people experiencing insomnia has risen to one in four. Google searches for the word "insomnia" have also surged significantly, with searches peaking around 3am. It is vital for health to maintain a regular sleep routine and good sleep hygiene. The quality and quantity of sleep impacts your physical health, mental resilience and immune function. For fitness enthusiasts, the summer can be a challenging time. Whilst it's important to keep active during these months, doing so in the face of soaring temperatures can be uncomfortable and even dangerous. With temperatures seemingly rising year on year it's important to adjust the way we do exercise to make sure we train safely and effectively during a heatwave. Whether you're a runner or you prefer high-intensity fitness classes, the effects of heat on the body can linger for hours after we stop exercising. You might feel fine when exercising only to find yourself tired, lethargic, and unable to concentrate later in the day. It's important to understand the effect heat has on the body so we can safely prepare and workout without incident. With the help of Nuffield Health wellbeing personal trainer Kay Miyake, we've put together a list of our top tips for safely working out in a heatwave. What is a heatwave? A heatwave is a prolonged period of hot weather that sees temperatures soar above what's typically expected in a particular region. The exact definition of a heatwave can vary depending on the climate in a specific area. In the UK, a heatwave can see temperatures soaring above 35°C, making it difficult to sleep and exercise safely. I don't want to exercise outside if you're concerned about soaring temperatures impacting your usual outdoor routine, we have a wide range of free at-home workouts on offer for all abilities. Take a look at any of the classes below to find out more: 10-minute low intensity indoor core workout 20-minute HIIT indoor workout 20-minute abs and back indoor workout 30-minute full-body indoor workout 45-minute full-body pump and core indoor workout The benefits of working out in a gym Working out in a Nuffield Health fitness and wellbeing centre means getting a workout in without worrying about overheating in the sun. All our centres are air-conditioned, making them the obvious choice for days where venturing outside is not an attractive option. Prioritise hydration A woman rehydrates on some water during her summer run Staying hydrated means that you're taking on enough water throughout the day, not just when you're exercising. A great way to stay hydrated is to find out how much fluid you need and spread it out evenly throughout the day. Doing this means you avoid playing catch up right before or during your workout. During a heatwave, you are going to sweat more when you exercise. Make sure to drink water every 15-20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty. Planning ahead and drinking small amounts before you think you think you need it helps you avoid burnout and prevents your muscles cramping up. Listen to your body and recognise warning signs Working out during a heatwave is much harder than working out in cooler weather. So if you aren't quite hitting the levels you're used to, don't panic. It's likely not due to your performance regressing or that you're losing fitness. High temperatures increase stress on the body, making it harder for us to perform at our best. To make things easier, adjust the intensity or duration of your workout depending on how you're feeling. For example, you could swap your usual long run for an intense shorter one. Or take that challenging midday HIIT workout and replace it with some relaxed yoga or an indoor core workout. The great thing about a heatwave is it forces us to adjust and explore new ways of working out. Heat-related illnesses can be serious, so it's crucial we listen to our body and recognise the signals when exercising in high temperatures. Pay attention to symptoms like dizziness, nausea, rapid heartbeat, excessive fatigue, or cramping. If you experience any of these signs, stop, find shade, and rehydrate. Properly protect your skin When exercising outdoors, protecting your skin from harmful UV radiation is crucial. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF rating that's suited to your skin type at least 15-30 minutes before you start exercising. Make sure all exposed areas are covered and that you reapply every two hours to avoid sunburn. If you sweat excessively or are taking part in a long, endurance session, you may need to reapply more frequently. Stay out of the midday sun When exercising stay out of the midday sun The sun is generally strongest between 11am and 3pm. During a heatwave, we recommend avoiding these hours and exercising earlier or later in the day. This helps you avoid peak temperatures and reduces the risk of you getting burned and developing conditions like heat exhaustion or heatstroke. Checking your local weather forecast goes a long way when adjusting your workout timings during summer. If you do venture out at midday, find a shaded area to protect yourself from the sun wherever possible and follow our guidance on hydration and protecting your skin against the sun. Choose suitable clothing to stay cool and comfortable Wearing the right clothes when temperatures soar really helps regulate your body temperature. Thin, breathable layers help prevent you from overheating whilst also allowing perspiration and air to pass through the garment. Avoid heavier cotton garments which promote the build-up of sweat. Instead, choose lightweight moisture-wicking fabrics that are specifically designed for active wear. Another thing to consider is the colour of your workout gear. Light-coloured clothes

help reflect the sun's rays rather than absorbing heat. If you're venturing out with the sun beating down on you, finish your outfit with a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses to protect your face and eyes from direct sunlight. Manage your rest and recovery Allow your body ample time to rest and recover after exercising in a heatwave. High temperatures put extra stress on our cardiovascular system, so it's important not to overexert yourself. Schedule regular rest days to promote recovery and prevent exhaustion. You should also make sure that you're getting enough good quality sleep when a heatwave strikes, as REM sleep plays a crucial role in your body's ability to repair and rejuvenate properly. Exercising in hot temperatures can be invigorating and even beneficial. It pushes us to work harder and move through discomfort, however it does require a conscious effort to think more about safety. With these tips, you can quickly and easily adapt and adjust your exercise routine during a heatwave, leaving you to enjoy a good workout in the sunshine.

The Best Workout Routine Ever, According to Science This is the best workout routine backed by science to build muscle and torch fat, using a circuit approach to resistance training. Amy Roberts, C.P.T. and Madison Freeman

Updated: Jul 10, 2024 12:18 PM EDT From shoulder workouts guaranteed to give you that sought-after capped look to at-home leg exercises promising ironclad quads to HIIT workouts ensuring you'll drop fat fast, it seems like every week there's a new study touting the best way to work out. Let's face it, no one workout regimen will work for every body. While an athlete training for a triathlon will have a regimen that circulates through runs, rides, and swims, a powerlifter will need to regularly perform compound movements like squats, bench presses, and deadlifts to gain the muscle they need to compete.

0:07 / 0:09 Old Elk Unveils the Most Interesting Whiskey of the Year Old Elk Unveils the Most Interesting Whiskey of the Year [Read More](#) And while there's no one-size-fits-all workout routine, one type of exercise promises a way to get your heart rate up, burn calories fast, and strengthen your muscles all at the same time. Circuit training, where you use heavy but manageable loads and work multiple muscle groups in the same routine by rotating through the exercises with little rest in between sets, can prompt the optimal metabolic response known as excess post-exercise oxygen consumption (EPOC). That "afterburn" effect of continued calorie consumption for up to 48 hours after a session can offer you the biggest bang for your effort and time. In This Article [Best Workout Routine, According to Science](#) 3. Barbell Bentover Rows 4. Dumbbell Split Squats 5. Dumbbell Chest Presses on Swiss Ball 6. Wide-Grip Pullups 7. Dumbbell Stepups 8. Medicine Ball Slams 9. Barbell Hip Thrusts 10. Decline Pushups

How Long Does it Realistically Take to Get in Shape? How Many Times a Week Should I Work Out? Best Workout Routine, According to Science We asked exercise scientist Jeffrey M. Willardson, Ph.D., C.S.C.S., associate professor of Kinesiology and Sports Studies at Eastern Illinois University to design a workout that incorporates these principles. Do each exercise for 10 to 15 repetitions, using weights that produce fatigue but not failure, and go from one move to the next without stopping. Willardson suggests repeating the circuit one to three times, every other day.

1. Dumbbell Front Squats Shirtless man in red shorts performs dumbbell front squats. Dumbbell Front Squats Beth Bischoff How to Do It Start with your feet on the ground slightly wider than hip-width apart, to start. Hold dumbbells above your shoulders with your elbows bent and arms close to your sides. Inhale and push your hips back while bending your knees until your thighs are parallel to the ground. Exhale and press the floor away to come back to a standing position. That's 1 rep. Repeat for 10 to 12 repetitions.
2. Dumbbell Shoulder Presses Man doing a seated dumbbell shoulder press Dumbbell Shoulder Press James Michelfelder How to Do It Start with the dumbbells in both hands, fingers facing forward, just above your shoulders by your ears, to start. Soften your knees until they aren't fully locked and brace your core. Take a deep breath in before exhaling as you push the dumbbells above your head, together but not touching. Resist the weight as you slowly bring them back down. That's 1 rep. Repeat for 10 to 15 repetitions.
3. Barbell Bentover Rows Shirtless man in black shorts performs bent over barbell row to burn fat and build muscle Bent Over Row Beth Bischoff How to Do It Begin by placing a barbell in front of you and grab it with an overhead grip, arms shoulder-width apart, to start. Bend your legs slightly and send your hips back until you are hinged at the waist. Let the barbell hang in front of your legs slightly without allowing it to touch you. Inhale, then exhale as you row the barbell up, pulling your shoulder blades together at the top. Slowly lower it back to start. That's 1 rep. Repeat the movement for 8 to 10 reps.
4. Dumbbell Split Squats Man in a red shirt performs an elevated dumbbell split squat Split Squat James Michelfelder How to Do It Standing in front of a bench, hold a dumbbell in each hand with your arms fully extended and palms facing one another, to start. Place your feet shoulder-width apart and elevate one foot behind you on a bench. Keeping a slight forward lean to your front leg, inhale as you bend the front leg until it's at or close to a 90-degree angle (you may need to move your foot forward or backward). Exhale as you push into the front foot to straighten the leg. That's 1 rep.
5. Dumbbell Chest Presses on Swiss Ball Chestpress How to Do It Sit on a Swiss ball, with a dumbbell in both hands resting on your thighs, to start. Slowly walk your body forward until your upper back is resting on the ball and your feet are right under your knees, which are bent at 90-degree angles. Shift the dumbbells so they're in a chest-press position, elbows slightly flared to the sides. Without letting your hips sag, inhale, then exhale and press the dumbbells up so your arms are straight above your chest. Inhale as you lower the weights back down. That's 1 rep. Repeat for 10 to 12 repetitions.
6. Wide-Grip Pullups Shirtless man with grey shorts performs wide-grip pullups. Wide-Grip Pullup Beth Bischoff How to Do It On a bar or assisted pullup machine, place your hands so they are each 6 to 8 inches beyond your shoulder width, fingers facing away from you, to start. Inhale, then exhale as you pull your body up, chin above the bar. Inhale as you lower down with control. That's 1 rep.
7. Dumbbell Stepups Shirtless man in dark grey shorts performs dumbbell setup up on bench Dumbbell Step-Up Beth Bischoff How to Do It Hold a dumbbell in each hand at your sides with your palms facing each other, to start. Using a box or bench, inhale then exhale as you step up with one foot and follow with the other so you're standing atop the platform. Step back down with the same foot. Do it again, leading with the opposite foot. That's 1 rep.
8. Medicine Ball Slams Shirtless man in black shorts performs a medicine ball floor slam. Medicine Ball Floor Slam Beth Bischoff How to Do It With your feet shoulder-width apart, lift a heavy medicine ball above your head, to start. Tighten your core and slightly drive your hips backward. Inhale, then using all the force you can muster, slam the ball into the floor in front of you. Catch it on the rebound (or pick it up). That's 1 rep.
9. Barbell Hip Thrusts Man in white tank top and black pants performs barbell hip thrusts on black bench. Barbell Hip Thrust James Michelfelder How to Do It Sit on the floor with your back perpendicular to a bench and a barbell resting in your hip crease, to start. Rest your shoulders against the bench and bend your knees so your feet are on the floor. With your hands holding the barbell in place, inhale, then exhale as you press your hips toward the ceiling until your body (from knees to shoulders) forms a flat tabletop position. Inhale as you crease your hips to lower your glutes back down. That's 1 rep.
10. Decline Pushups Man in a black tank top, blue shorts, and blue shoes performs a decline pushup on a bench. Decline Pushup James Michelfelder How to Do It Come into a plank position with your feet elevated on a bench and your hands directly under your shoulders, to start. Inhale as you lower your chest toward the ground, making sure that your elbows stay tucked back behind you, not flaring to the sides. Exhale as you push up. That's 1 rep.

How Long Does it Realistically Take to Get in Shape? According to Jahkeen Washington, a certified personal trainer and owner of Harlem Kettlebell Club, the amount of time it takes to lose weight varies from person to person and comes down to how often they train, how they train, their nutrition, and their starting point. "I think that a three-month commitment to exercise two to three times a week is plenty, and that's where I've seen most people really start to buy in and see the results they're looking for," says Washington. "For the first month, you tend to learn the how, the what, the why—what exercises work and what doesn't work. Then by months two and three, you're able to really start to adjust and hit things pretty hard. By then, someone just got their 30 days in, they've got some consistency, and some of that early soreness that they experience is starting to fade away." Young muscular man exercising with weights, doing bench press. About 20 years old Caucasian man.

How to Build a Workout Routine That Delivers Big Results [Read More](#) How Many Times a Week Should I Work Out? A workout routine isn't as easy as a simple math equation. According to Washington while three days might be the key to fat loss and muscle gain for some people, others might have to squeeze a few more workouts in to see the results they want. "In a perfect world, someone can train five days a week," says Washington. "In terms of weight loss, I think it depends on the person and how much weight they're trying to lose." Someone trying to shave off five pounds won't need to be as aggressive. They won't need to work as hard or as frequently as someone who has a lot more to lose or is looking to set a goal and have a timeframe on it. The amount of weight someone wants to lose (and how quickly) will dictate how many times per week they need to work out.